

Associazione Delle Città del Bio - Association of Organic Cities



Who we are

Città del Bio is an Association that brings together those municipalities and territorial bodies that share the choice of promoting organic farming, not only intended as an agricultural model, but also as a cultural project.

Città del Bio encourages a strong cooperation among realities which are very different from one another - as, for instance, between production areas and urban areas; in fact, despite their differences, their relationship is likely to create new opportunities for promoting environmental and quality life protection.

Città del Bio promotes the establishment of a link between production and consumption, as eating is an 'agricultural act', as famously said the American poet and farmer Wendell Berry, and a new form of agriculture can only develop with the involvement of citizens-consumers, who are, in effect, co-producers.

Città del Bio associates municipalities and cities that want to share the advantage of belonging to an international network, while being able to provide and receive advice and skills, for the realisation of a common project whose aim is to increase the value of territories.



Territories

Territories are areas inhabited by a community, with its diverse identities and traditional knowledge, its economic activities, its administrative units; a complex net in which environment, landscape, and agriculture are inherently connected.

Territories, especially in the last years, have been the main actors in facilitating the development of the best entrepreneurial experiences, they show evidence of a green economy which is increasingly becoming more and more concrete, starting exactly from food farming.

Organic farming is, therefore, an opportunity for promoting and enhancing territorial value, moving from the conversion of every single farm, to that of a whole territory, and involving the economic activities of various production branches, while demanding businesses to implement eco-sustainability-based production disciplines.



Organic farming

The **land** is the **most important resource of employment** and it is necessary to choose a new model of agriculture, which shall be: organic, rural, multifunctional and able to guarantee the production of quality food.

Organic farming records significant growth trends almost everywhere in the world, claiming itself to be one of the most dynamic branches in the primary sector and gaining an increasingly growing number of consumers, with a steady increase in production and dedicated areas.

Organic farming represents a model of sustainable economic growth, as it is that committed to resource conservation, environmental compatibility, and enhancement of local differences. Organic farming is the choice of those who care about their health and that of the ecosystem we live in, adopting a new lifestyle. Organic farming is a set of principles and values that represent an original view of how humans shall take care of land, water, plants and animals to produce, prepare and distribute food and other goods.

Organic agriculture concerns the way in which people interact with living landscapes, relate to each other, contribute to the development and maintenance of a heritage for future generations. Organic agriculture is a method of production that

supports the health and the natural fertility of soil, protecting the ecosystem and the people. It is based on ecological processes, biodiversity and production cycles suitable for local conditions, limiting the input of products and technical equipment from outside the farm.

Organic farming combines tradition, innovation and science, so that the shared environment could truly benefit and moreover it promotes good relationships and quality life for all of those who are involved.

It is recognised by the EU, which, since 1991, has defined the production and certification methods through its own regulations. It was born at the beginning of the '900 as an alternative experience in the development of chemical agriculture.

Today, organic farming is an opportunity involving not only agricultural production, but also other sectors, such as food farming processing, catering, hospitality, textile industry, cosmetic industry, personal and environmental hygiene, bio-architecture and bio-building.

Organic farming is the point where to start in order to build a model of a truly sustainable economy.



Bio-Districts

Città del Bio promotes the establishment and development of Bio-Districts.

The project of a Bio-District involves all of the community living in that territory in a team play that is used to bring together the various opportunities of each context.

The **Bio-District** defines its sphere of action and its territorial boundaries on the basis of economic and social criteria and the sharing of the project by local, institutional, economic and social actors. At the end of the constitution process, its territorial scope will be precisely defined.

The **Bio-District** is an expression of self-determination by the local community to pursue common goals and is a tool for rationalising costs, processes and politics of production, communication and marketing of District products, territorial marketing and promotion, with the view of combining professional skills that would help to overcome the existing commercial and distributive gap.



Food education

Food is life, health, well-being, pleasure, conviviality, culture, identity, and expression of the relationship with the environment we live in.

Food is a right. Food definitions could form a wide list. Food is also knowledge and knowledge can go through food. 'Eating' becomes 'knowing'. Eating is not just assimilation and sustenance, but is also understanding, knowing, becoming more aware.

Food is an engaging experience that we repeat at least three times a day. Food could be the basis for building a process of overall sustainability. And if each one of us chooses responsibly good and organic food, we would provide a positive contribution in order to address the challenges of our territories in the best way.



Food policies in the Cities

From the cooperation between the cities that consume and the territories that produce, a new model of development can emerge for our country, as well as for any other country in which food farming production is a strategic asset.

In order to do so, cities need to re-evaluate food policies as strategic goals of their action and become major actors, even in this area.

Food policies represent, therefore, one of the driving axes of Smart Cities, since the Mayors play many roles in this respect:

- **they are consumers**, as they administer directly or indirectly the role of 'collective restaurateurs', through school canteens and health, social and productive facilities' canteens;
- **they are regulators in the market**, as they have the power to regulate wholesale and retail markets, the places of sale to consumption, they have the power to promote the direct relationship between producers and consumers, seasonality and to protect local productions, thus guaranteeing - albeit indirectly - the protection of biodiversity;
- **they are logistics managers**, since they have the power of defining traffic policies in accessing cities;
- **they are planners**, as they have the power, through urban planning tools, to limit soil consumption, while promoting the same agricultural production through the use of urban spaces and their territory to food farming activities and determining local energy and environmental policies;
- **they are responsible for public hygiene and health**, adopting rules and regulations that prevent, or at least limit, the access in the city to foodstuffs that are not good, healthy and clean and whose origin is unknown;
- **they are responsible for waste disposal**, and therefore they can encourage policies that would reduce food waste and that would push citizens to adopt similar behaviours;
- **they are responsible for social policies**, and therefore they are able to activate, encourage, coordinate actions that would allow all citizens to have access to at least a minimum amount of food necessary for a decent life;
- **they are responsible for cultural and educative policies in the cities**, and therefore able to promote food education activities in schools, starting with children in nursery school, and to adopt communication actions that better target citizens to consciously care more about a healthy nutrition for themselves and their families;
- **they are institutional actors in local credit and financial systems**, therefore they could act to allow access to credit for small businesses engaged in agricultural production;
- **they are top local governance leaders and, therefore, Mayors of new communities based on solidarity**, who are able - thanks to their authority derived from the honour of having being democratically chosen by their citizens - to promote relationships with regional authorities, with the business system, with citizens' representations, with stakeholders, in order to reinforce their action with the participation of all of the other social actors of the territory;
- **they are actors of international cooperation**, who act in joint action with their twin cities or with whom they have institutional relationships, in order to build an international network that aims for achieving those goals set for the EXPO 2015 in the Milan Food Policy Pact, signed by Città del Bio.



Associated bodies

Each associated body promotes those actions which are more suitable in relation to their territorial reality, taking inspiration from the guidelines of the Association and in particular from the following points:

- adopting and encouraging a cautious and efficient use of resources, promoting sustainable consumption and a production disciplined by consistent regulations with the aim of a lasting growth;
- promoting information and training on the issues of lasting growth, both towards their staff and to the producers and traders of their territory, as well as towards their citizens;
- being an active part in protecting the health and well-being of citizens;
- promoting the use of organic food during institutional consumption (schools and collective catering), favouring the development of local economies;
- promoting food education through conscious consumption orientation;
- adopting a deliberation for the ban on the cultivation of GMOs on its municipal territory and for the commitment to the evaluation of typical and organic productions;
- promoting the markets of organic producers and the 'short chain', that is the direct relationship between producers and consumers;
- defending biodiversity, with the adoption of a variety at risk of extinction;
- offering to their citizens, through information desks, information, ideas, contacts and projects the promotion of an 'organic development' consciousness;
- building cooperative communities open to everyone;
- promoting and practicing the values of peace, justice and equity;
- promoting the development of a network in their region, involving new bodies and territorial realities.